



Streamline and Clarify Standard Water Right Application Process

Lean Project Progress Report for Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3: August 28, 2012

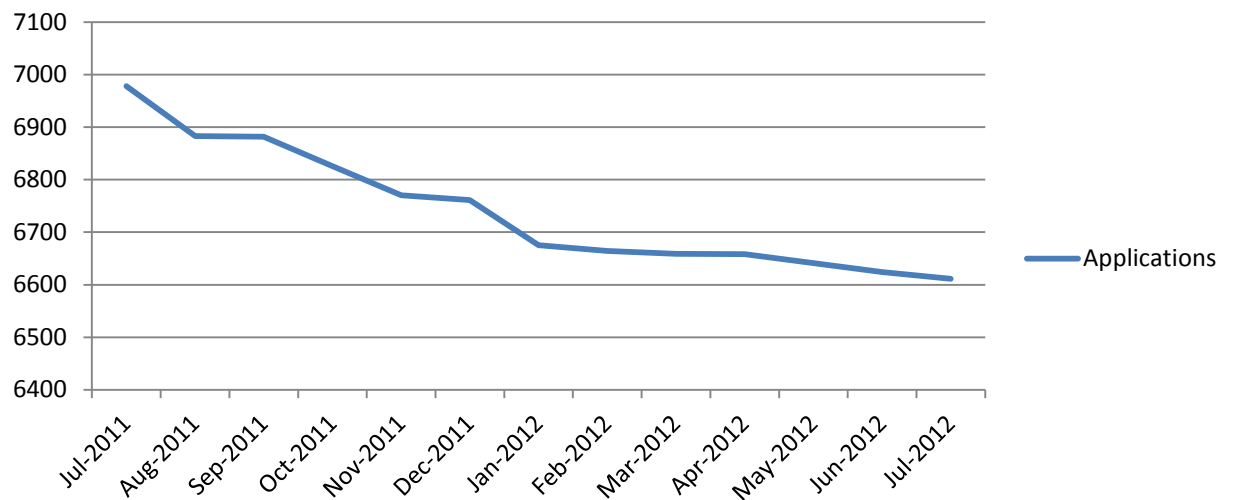
Prepared By: Jeff Marti and Barb Anderson and

Event Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1: Improve the intake process of new applications.- June 2011 • Phase 2: Improve Ecology's investigation and documentation for each new application. - September 2011 • Phases 3 and 4: Improve the record of decision and water rights certificate process. - November 2011 		
Background	<p>There is a backlog of about 6,619 (a reduction of 381 since fall 2011) water right permit applications. In 2011, the Legislature passed a new law requiring Ecology to review the water right application process to simplify the procedures, eliminate unnecessary steps, and decrease the time required to issue decisions. In June 2011, the program started analyzing the four phases of the water right permit application process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake of new applications. • Investigating and documenting new applications. • Recording the decision. • Certifying the water right. 		
Project Objective(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce permit application backlog. • Reduce the time it takes to make decisions on applications. • Develop consistency across regional offices. 		
Value Stream Mapping Outcome	Current Situation (Old Way)	Future (New Way)	Benefits
	Customer submits water right application and fees without consulting with Ecology first.	Ecology provides a pre-application consultation to applicants as way to weed and feed future water right applications.	<p>Applicants have a better understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any additional fees that might apply. • The availability of water in their project area. • Where they are in line. • Ecology has a better process for the weeding and feeding of applications (letters sent to applicants to update their information).
	The fiscal office was using four different processes for the intake of the application and fee and was taking responsibility for getting the applications to the regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fiscal office is now using one process to intake the application and fee. • They only process the check now and headquarters • WR staff are now responsible for picking up the applications and doing the same day scanning to get them to the appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced fiscal staff time so they are free to do other work. • Application intake is faster in the regions because of the new same day scanning process. • No more overnight mail to Spokane saves money.

		regional office for processing.	
	The process for notifying interested parties about pending water right applications was very labor intensive for some of the regions because it required staff to spend a lot of time copying and mailing.	Rely on RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feed technology to notify interested parties about pending water right applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces staff time and postage because they no longer have to copy the application and mail it to interested parties. • Saves money because RSS feeds are free.
	Too much time spent tracking down applicants who have moved.	Staff will only make two attempts to track down applicants who have moved before the application is cancelled	Implementing this new process will help Ecology weed out any applications in the backlog where the applicant has moved on and no longer needs the water.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants are required to provide Ecology a lot of information as part of their water right application. • The current process does not provide clear guidance to the applicant about what kind of “more information” we will require them to submit before we can process their application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the pre-application consultation Ecology will provide the applicant with all the information requirements they must meet for Ecology to process their application. • More extensive use of preliminary permits may also be an option to speed up the decision making process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant will have a better understanding of the type of information they will be required to submit as part of their application. • This will result in a quicker processing of the application because the permit manager will have all the information required to start the review and make a decision.
Activities to Implement Future State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement process for same day scanning of applications • Implement RSS feed for notifying interested parties of pending applications. • Publish updated new and change water right applications to a 8 ½ x 11 format to make the form easier to use. • Publish 62 water availability focus sheets to help facilitate the pre-application conference. • Develop a pre-application process, including development of forms for internal and external use • Develop investigator’s manual to improve consistency around the state and hasten decision making • Develop a more comprehensive water rights website that includes most of the items listed above • Post permitting work plan on-line and develop outreach program so stakeholders know where we will work and what expected outcomes are. • Implement a sub-basin “weed and feed” approach to permitting • Improve consistency of collection of data and data entry in WRATS around the state so 		

	reports can be autogenerated from WRATS
Results to Date	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented process for same day scanning of applications • Implemented RSS feed for notifying interested parties of pending applications, notified Washington tribes and other interested parties. • Published updated new and change water right applications to a 8 ½ x 11 format to make the form easier to use and print. • Published 62 water availability focus sheets to help facilitate the pre-application conference. • Developed forms and checklists for pre-application process that began in January. • Implemented the pre-application process in all four regional offices. Early feedback from customers is very positive. • Redesigned the water right information on Ecology's web site to enable customers to find what they were looking for more quickly. • Performed "weed-and-feed" in WRIAs 19,20 and 21 (Lyre/Hoko,Solduc/Hoh, Queets/Quinault) in the SWRO. Sent letters to 53 applicants asking for updated contact information including email addresses, and culling out applications where folks have either sold their property or changed their plans. Of the 53, 29 confirmed interest in maintaining applications and there were 24 rejected/withdrawn applications • Similarly, CRO sent out 125 status update letters to applicants in the Moxie-Wide - Hollow Basin. This has resulted in 25 withdrawals and 47 applicants indicating they wish to be "on hold", i.e., willing to wait. <p>In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on investigators manual (a manual and guidance document for investigating water right applications). • Working on a strategic program plan and outreach strategy to put us in a more proactive position in the future. <p>Under Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Rights Tracking System manual to ensure consistency in permit processing and data entry across regions. <p>We are slowly gaining ground on our number of pending applications, Since July 1, 2011, we have received 401 new applications. We made approved, cancelled or obtained voluntary withdrawals on 858 applications. There are now approximately 6622 pending applications.</p>

Pending Applications July 2011 - July 2012



Discussion about Results

- The pre-application process is working well when it happens. Feedback from both staff and applicants is positive. However, most applicants are not choosing to engage in pre-application consultation. Pre-application consultation is optional; in addition, many applicants are relying on old application forms downloaded months or even years ago which do not indicate the opportunity to engage in pre-application consultation. To date, we have held ~28 pre-application consultations. Of those applicants who have engaged in pre-app consultation, about 15 have or are expected to file applications. This suggests that – when it occurs -- pre-application is having some effect on or delaying or reducing the number of incoming applications. Water Resources should evaluate how to make pre-app consultation more prevalent.
- The “weed and feed” letters are providing us a low-cost method for removing applications from the backlog.

Future Action Plan (Milestones)

What?	Who?	When?
Complete work on investigator manual	Jeff Marti, , Phil Crane, Mike Gallagher, Victoria Leuba, Barb Anderson, Trevor Hutton, Scott Turner, Tom Culhane, Doug Wood, Kevin Brown, Dan Tolleson, Brad Caldwell, Jim Pacheco, Don Davidson, Tom Loranger.	November 2012
Develop first draft of preliminary permit/ front loading module.	Jeff Marti and team	Fall 2012
Identify a team to develop or update the clerical and WRTS coordinator manual.	Mike Gallagher	After new WRTS System is complete.
Second Legislative report.	Tom Loranger.	October 2012